



League of Women Voters®
of Virginia



Voter Express

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PRE-SESSION LEGISLATIVE ROUNDTABLE:

Wednesday, December 5, 2018

Location: John Marshall VIRGINIA Ballroom, 101
N. 5th St, Richmond, VA 23219

Time: 8:30 a.m., Sign in; 9:00 a.m., Program

By Linda Garvelink,
First Vice-President and Treasurer

Each year, League members and coalition partners look forward to the first Wednesday of December for the LWV-VA Pre-session Legislative Roundtable. *Pre-Session* is an eye-opening experience open to the public. A parade of issue experts – roughly 20 experienced leaders, skilled lobbyists, and thoughtful activists – share their insights on the agenda for the upcoming Virginia General Assembly. This year presenters have a maximum of ten minutes to outline proposed bills and expected General Assembly actions in their areas of expertise. We will hear about the state’s financial position, redistricting, election security, ERA ratification, fracking, pipelines, sea levels, transportation, schools, implementation of Medicaid expansion, and more.

After the morning session of power presentations from issue experts, League members and others continue networking over lunch, including presentations and Q&A with administration officials. Our enticing buffet lunch offers choices of Caesar salad, beef and vegetable stew, stuffed chicken breast, vegetable penne pasta, whipped potatoes, roasted vegetables, artisan rolls, and pecan, lemon chess, or chocolate chess pie.

To enjoy the sumptuous, healthy buffet and participate in the luncheon discussion with administrative officials, pre-registration is required by Friday, Nov. 23, the day after Thanksgiving. Seating is limited. The fee is \$35.00. All pre-registrations are online. Payment can be made via PayPal (no account required) or by mailing a check. Go to <http://bit.ly/2ILs9qC>.

Otherwise, the morning session is open to the public without pre-registration or fee: sign in at the welcome table on December 5.

What do those who have attended previous Pre-Session’s have to say?

I attended for the first time last year. I was stunned by the gathering of such knowledgeable people. It made me want to come again and again. There’s so much to learn. It’s a wonderful resource. Pat Cochran of Charlottesville.

It’s a 5-star event for legislative geeks and offers access to the experts. Rubyjean Gould of Williamsburg.

I was awed by the amount of information set before us in 3-3.5 short hours. Time flew. It may be naive, but the presenters opened my eyes to the vast effect the Virginia General Assembly has on our every day lives. Linda Garvelink of Falls Church.

VOTE411

By Evelyn Glazier, LWV Richmond Metro Area

The League’s 2018 electronic voters’ guide is available at www.vote411.org and includes information on all races and issues on the November 6th ballot: US Senate, US House of Representatives, two Virginia Constitutional Amendments, and any local regular and special elections. The League sends questionnaires to all candidates in all races and the candidates answer in their own words.

VOTE411 is easy to use. Go to the site, enter your address, and follow the prompts to see all the candidates and issues that will be on your individual ballot. To see additional races, on the opening screen, omit your address and click on the words **online voters’ guide** in the first line of text. Then on the next screen, browse **all races** or **all candidates**.

VOTE411 is a project of the LWVUS, in cooperation with state and local Leagues. Check it out and share it with your family and friends. The information is especially valuable for down ballot races and ballot issues, which do not get much publicity. If you like what you see, your local League's VOTE411 committee would appreciate your help with the 2019 voters' guide!

STUDY, INFORM, ACT

By Deb Wake, Action Chair

League of Women Voters® has always been about empowering and engaging voters. We study issues and inform. We formulate positions through consensus or concurrence of our members and then we use these positions to inform our action.

In preparing for the 2019 Virginia General Assembly session, we have identified six legislative priorities:

1. Redistricting
2. Elections and Voting
3. ERA Ratification
4. Behavioral Health
5. Gun Violence Prevention
6. Education

We focused on these priorities in the Action & Advocacy portion of our Fall Workshop held in September in Williamsburg. The positions and talking points can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2D4BXfs>.

Facebook pages focused on each of the above priority issues have been established to allow members to share and discuss. Facebook groups have also been formed for issues that are not legislative priorities this year but are still important to us. More information about these can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2yzvuFf>

We are also working to build statewide committees around issues of interest. The Behavioral Health Committee is an example of members across the state, from different local leagues, coming together to work on a specific issue of interest. Committees have also formed around Redistricting in coordination with our OneVirginia2021 partner. Members of the league and many other organizations have been busy working to make Virginia the 38th state to ratify the ERA and complete the state-by-state process to amend the US Constitution. Contact your local league president or email actioncoordinator@lww-va.org to get involved.

What can you do before the 2019 session begins? Plenty! You are a constituent and you have the power of your vote! Meet now with your legislators. Some Leagues coordinate visits well before the General

Assembly begins. Cultivate a relationship and find out what is important to your legislator and try to find issues you can agree on and work on together. Report your activity:

1. Let your local league and the action coordinator know about your conversations
2. Share with others in the committee or on the Facebook working group page
3. Record your activity for the Advocacy Challenge: <http://bit.ly/2CI6GxZ>.

The Advocacy Challenge is a friendly competition to reward local leagues for advocacy actions. The data is useful to LWV (at all levels) when applying for grants and for attracting members and donors. It also informs us about which activities seem most effective. Prizes will be awarded at the LWVVA Convention May 18-19 in Norfolk:

- 1st place: \$650
- 2nd place: \$200
- 3rd place: \$150

Make plans now to attend the annual *Pre-Session* on Wednesday, December 5 at the John Marshall Ballroom. Once the session is underway, you'll be receiving Action Alerts just like you do from LWVUS. Please participate in these by emailing or calling your legislators (and remember to record them on the Advocacy Challenge webform).

The Women's Legislative Round Table (WLRT) begins on January 16 at a new location—the Sun Trust Center, 919 E. Main St., Richmond, VA 23219, across the street from the current legislator offices in the Pocahontas Building. Like the *Pre-Session*, speakers from our partner organizations give us legislative updates. We also welcome legislators as their schedules permit. You can follow WLRT with visits to senate or house sessions and appointments with your legislators or their staff members. More info here: <http://bit.ly/2D5bLkU>. Mark your calendar to celebrate League Day together at the General Assembly on February 6. Find details on the website after plans are finalized.

IMPORTANT DATES

November 6th: ELECTION DAY!

November 9th – 18th Welcome the ERA Bus Tour when legislators visit over 16 colleges and universities. <https://varatifyera.org/era-bus-tour/>

November 27th: GIVING TUESDAY – contribute to our "Ed Fund" here: <http://bit.ly/2ynwtYh>